

# **Exhibit 6**



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**BYLINE:** By BRIAN NEARING Staff Writer

**BODY:**

ALBANY - Two African-American members of the city Common Council blasted Mayor Jerry Jennings on Tuesday for ignoring their communities when he hand-picked a 45-member committee to study the city's future last month.

Council members Corey Ellis and Barbara Smith said they were not appeased by Jennings' subsequent decision under pres sure to increase the number of African Americans on the Re-Capitalize Albany committee from one to four.

The committee is expected to issue recommendations this fall on improving the city's neighborhoods, schools and business climate. The original membership included no one from the city's neighborhood associations or PTAs. Two-thirds of the members didn't live in the city.

"We feel left out of the process once again," said Ellis, who spoke with Smith during a news conference at the Center for Law and Justice. "We were neglected and disrespected."

Center Director Alice Green, who waged an unsuccessful bid for mayor against Jennings last fall, said the mayor has a "disturbing policy of exclusion directed against African-Americans" in his administration. "Sadly, he just doesn't get it."

A political firestorm broke out after critics charged that Jennings' committee was stacked with the region's business and professional elite at the expense of the city's minorities and grass-roots neighborhood groups.

"Who is in the room determines the content of the dialogue," said Smith. "It's like having a committee to revise the cuisine in the county and you only have 45 French chefs on it." Smith represents North Albany and parts of Arbor Hill, while Ellis represents Arbor Hill and parts of West Hill, which are predominantly minority neighborhoods.

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After initially saying he would not revamp his committee because of criticism, Jennings added seven new members last week, including three African Americans. A call to his office for comment was not returned.

Many of the city's African American clergy are also concerned about the issue, said Timothy Harper, pastor of New Jerusalem Home of Saved Church on Sheridan Avenue.

"Acceptance of any solutions offered by the committee will be very low with local involvement," said Harper, who attended the news conference. "We are not against the mayor on this. We are supporting ourselves."

On Friday, Jennings added seven members, including three African Americans - Common Council member Carolyn McLaughlin; John Higgins, a lawyer with Nixon Peabody, a downtown law firm that handles the city's legal work for the Rapp Road dump; and Anthony Owens, a community development compliance manager at Key Bank.

Also included are Common Council President Pro Tempore Richard Conti; Gene Solan, head of the not-for-profit Neighborhood Resource Center; Jan Smith, spokeswoman for General Electric Power Systems; and Elizabeth Griffin, former head of the Historic Albany Foundation and a city Planning Board member.

Brian Nearing can be reached at 454-5094 or by e-mail at [bnearing@timesunion.com](mailto:bnearing@timesunion.com).

**GRAPHIC:** Photo

SKIP DICKSTEIN/TIMES UNION ALICE GREEN of the Center for Law and Justice, second from left, talks about the appointments to the Recapitalize Albany committee. She is flanked by Alderman Corey Ellis and McKinley Jones. At right is Alderwoman Barbara Smith.

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